RG104 entry 217 box 1

Mint of the United States.

Philadelphia Sept. 10th 1866

Hon. Hugh McCulloch

Secretary of the Treasury

Sir

In a letter from Hon. Wm. E. Chandler, Asst Secty. of the Treasury, of the 8th inst, I was informed that Mr. Edward R. Hall of New York, had been authorized to communicate "the details of his plan to obviate defects in coining small U.S. coin, either in person or by letter" to me for examination.

In accordance with this authority, he did on the 14th inst, by letter communicate his plans, drawings &c. A copy of his communication is hereby forwarded to you.

We have given this plan a full and fair examination, and as a general result, say, that we have not been able to discover anything so new or practicable, as to justify the adoption of any of the suggestions.

First— It appears that the principal object of this invention is to enable us to distinguish the coins in the dark, or without looking at them. This is by no means a desideratum, except for the blind. People ought always to look at the money offered to them; not only to see what it stands for, but also to see what metal it is made of. If they do not, they may often

RG104 entry 217 box 1

receive a counterfeit, made of type metal or cast iron, and would really deserve to lose for being so careless.

Mr. Hall after stating his plan, and claiming that it approaches perfection, afterwards recognizes the importance of looking at a coin, when he suggests different colors for the different pieces. It is a plain case, that if we are to look for the colors, we need not feel for the holes, which is the distinguishing feature of his invention.

But, Secondly, the method suggested is utterly impracticable as a coinage operation. There are to be one, two, or three perforations according to value. When are they to be made? in cutting the planchet, or striking the coin? If the former, then those that have more than one hole will never be right when they come to the press, unless they are carefully laid with the fingers one by one, and very slowly, say at the rate of four or five a minute, instead of sixty or eighty as in ordinary working. As to making the holes in the act of striking, that is an impossibility.

Thirdly – although it is not impossible to make coins with one, two or three holes, by first piercing them in the blanchet, yet the additional care and labor would make it a very expensive operation. Probably each piece, no matter how base and valueless, in fact, would cost the

RG104 entry 217 box 1

Government more than its current or assumed value.
It is therefore, as we said, impracticable.

Fourthly— the idea is not a novelty, and is therefore hardly a fair claim for a patent, unless it be for making a plurality of holes. In China they have been making Cash with a large central hole, for a thousand years, and it is very convenient for stringing them together by the hundred, but then these pieces are cast, not struck, and a barbarous kind of currency they are.

Again in 1850, some trial pieces were made at this Mint, of cent pieces with a hole in the cent, but it was found that they would cost more than they were worth and were very difficult to make, and more than that, there was no good object to be attained. The better plan would be to dispense with the holes, and have one, two, or three stars or mullets (Mr. Hall's drawing's has mullets, but stars would be more in keeping) which would be as perceptible to the touch as a perforation.

But the figures 2. III. and 5, answer just as good a purpose. As to inserting a piece of silver, as Mr. Hall also proposes, that has been tried in England, and ended with making some curiosities for coin collectors. The other suggestions being of a general nature, and containing nothing new, need not be dwelt upon.

The Executive Officers of the Mint who have examined the plans, fully concur in ~~these~~ the views now expressed. These remarks are made in a spirit of candor, believing that Mr. Hall is really in quest of truth, I submit these criticisms for his consideration ~~alone~~, and also for the judgment of yourself.

Very respectfully

A. L. Pollock
Director

James Pollock
Director U.S. Mint
Philadelphia

Sept 10 1866

Submits views on Mr. E. R. Hall's plans for extending depots on coining floor.

Sept 10th 1866

Mint Office Sept 10
Copy sent E. R. Hall
Chief Clerk
Copy sent to Mr. Hall
Supt Mint
Mint 18th Sept 1866.

RECEIVED
SEP 11 1866
SECRETARY'S OFFICE

RG104 entry 217 box 1